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CIA/ONE/STAFF MEM/32-61

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

3 July 1961

STAFF MEMORANDUM NO. 32-61 (Internal ONE Working Paper -
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SUBJECT: Consequences of Positioning of British Forces in Kuwait

1. In Iraq. The presence of British troops in Kuwait will almost certainly deter the Iraqis from attempting to seize Kuwait by force. The Iraqis will respond vigorously by means of propaganda attacks against the UK, and possibly by harassing the Iraq Petroleum Company. Additionally, Qasim's public mishandling of this situation may stimulate opposition elements to try to remove him

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2. In Kuwait. British forces will probably be welcomed initially. The ruling family of Kuwait will be pleased and reassured at the prompt response by the UK to protect their interests. Insofar as other elements of the Kuwait populace actually fear an Iraqi invasion attempt, they too will welcome

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outside assistance. However, this welcome is likely to be short-lived. The prospects for a rapid turn-about to a "let's get the imperialists out" attitude are good. The longer the troops stay, the more intense such a feeling is likely to become.

3. In the Arab World. Reactions will probably focus on the "imperialist" move by the UK in landing troops particularly if no overt move or buildup of forces occurs in Iraq. While denying the correctness of Iraqi claims to Kuwait, the various Arab governments and the Arab press are likely to view British military intervention, even at the Kuwait Government's invitation, as an affront to Arab nationalism. The Soviets will almost certainly play on this theme.

4. For the UK. As indicated above, the reappearance of strong British forces in the Gulf will have the disadvantage of reviving traditional Arab fear and hatred of the British -- at a time when British relations in the Arab world were on a gradual upward trend. In addition, the UK will face a dilemma when the troops are removed. For Qasim can, merely by moving a few units to the Basra area, renew the pressure on the British and Kuwait unless the UK maintains fairly strong forces in the Persian Gulf area.

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